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February 19, 2019

TO: Chairpersons and Members of the Commerce Committee

RE: Public Hearing on 2/20/19

My name is Carmen Romeo and I am the President of Fascia's Chocolates. We have been manufacturing premium chocolates in Waterbury since 1964. I am a Board Member of the Smaller Manufacturers Association and delegate to the Connecticut Manufacturers Collaborative as well as a Board Member of the Greater Waterbury Regional Chamber and a member of its Manufacturing Council.

I am sorry I cannot be there in person to offer testimony on 3 bills that are very important to manufacturers. You will hear many of my manufacturing colleagues give specific examples of why these bills are important. I would simply like to state my support for the following bills and ask that the committee move them forward and for individual legislators to support them to the end:

SB-855 to establish a Secretary of Manufacturing is the highest priority. We never want to expand government but a single cabinet level person can help make sure all the existing, well-meaning, but not always user-friendly programs that exist in different departments, that often act as silos, are working to the benefit of manufacturers.

SB-854 should make sure that high schools are measured and rewarded for preparing graduates to go into manufacturing careers equally with enrolling in college. Not all students need college and they can be extremely productive members of society in a manufacturing career.

SB-856 will help ensure a greater role for the manufacturing community in evaluating the need and effectiveness of state policies and investments in education, technology and other programs designed to help Connecticut manufacturers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carmen Romeo, President